

INCOMING TELEGRAM

5 DEPARTMENT OF STATE—DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

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Control 7683

Rec'd October 20, 1949
12:59 a.m.

FROM: Athens

TO: Secretary of State

NO: AMAG 77, October 19, 4 p.m.

I wish to call Department's attention to Van Fleet's telegram L-4124 October 17 containing recommendation as to size and functions of British Military Mission to Greece in response to Department Army request for his views on this matter. In general I strongly approve recommendations contained therein, particularly those suggesting immediate and drastic reductions in strength BMM(O). However, in interest of maintaining American-British partnership in military assistance to Greece, which I presume is still Department's policy, I suggest that immediate steps be taken to reach agreement between Washington and London, defining functions not only of Americans and British Army Missions but Air and Naval Missions as well. L-4124 points out in some detail with regard to the Army and offers general suggestions which I consider acceptable concerning Air Force and Navy. General agreement would eliminate duplication and overlapping of functions and would prepare the way for sizeable reductions in all American and British Military Missions in Greece with consequent savings not only in dollar but in drachma budget as well. Greek War Ministry for FY 1950, for example, carries charge of 14 billion drachma for British Military Missions, by far largest of which is Army group.

As suggested MYTEL 74 of September 23, I recommend question of maintaining British Brigade in Greece be given renewed consideration. In past, presence of

this brigade

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this brigade may have helped to deter Communists from attempting any moves against urban centers, particularly Salonika, but possibility such Communist action now remote. It seems to me doubtful that present British Brigade in Greece would be any deterrent to full-scale aggression by Soviet satellites. Furthermore, I do not believe that the disposition and plans for this brigade envisage its serving as cadre or providing bridgehead for despatch of larger British forces in case outbreak of war. Brigade itself results in no direct charge on Greek budget or American aid but constitutes a drain on British resources with no particular benefit and affords opportunity for Communists' propaganda to depict Greece as under foreign occupation. Withdrawal of brigade, together with reduction of British and American Military Missions, are logical steps in view of altered military situation and may serve to increase feeling of self-reliance we are attempting to foster among the Greeks.

GRADY

MAM: IMT

Note: Passed to Army Department 10/20/49, 5:10 a.m. EMB

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